



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

AL
1842
75

FRIENDSHIP

The GOOD and PERFECT GIFT
BY RUTH OGDEN



1842.75

1.00
net
4x
73

HARVARD COLLEGE
LIBRARY



THE GIFT OF
ALBERT ARNOLD SPRAGUE

Class of 1898

OF CHICAGO

Frances S. fragile
Easter 1907

6 A. 2. 9.



FRIENDSHIP

FRIENDSHIP

THE GOOD AND
PERFECT GIFT

By "RUTH OGDEN"

(MRS. CHARLES W. IDE)

NEW YORK
FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

AL1442.75

Copyright, 1903

By FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY

Published in October, 1903

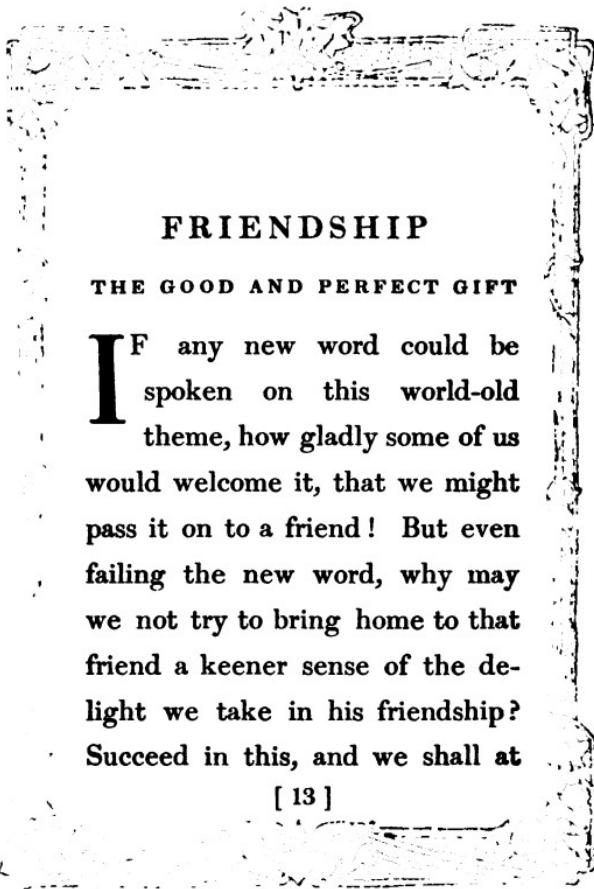


Albert A. Spangler

"BY friendship I mean the greatest love and the greatest usefulness, and the most open communication, and the noblest sufferings, and the most exemplary faithfulness, and the severest truth, and the heartiest counsel, and the greatest union of mind of which brave men and women are capable."

— JEREMY TAYLOR.

F R I E N D S H I P
THE GOOD AND PERFECT GIFT



FRIENDSHIP

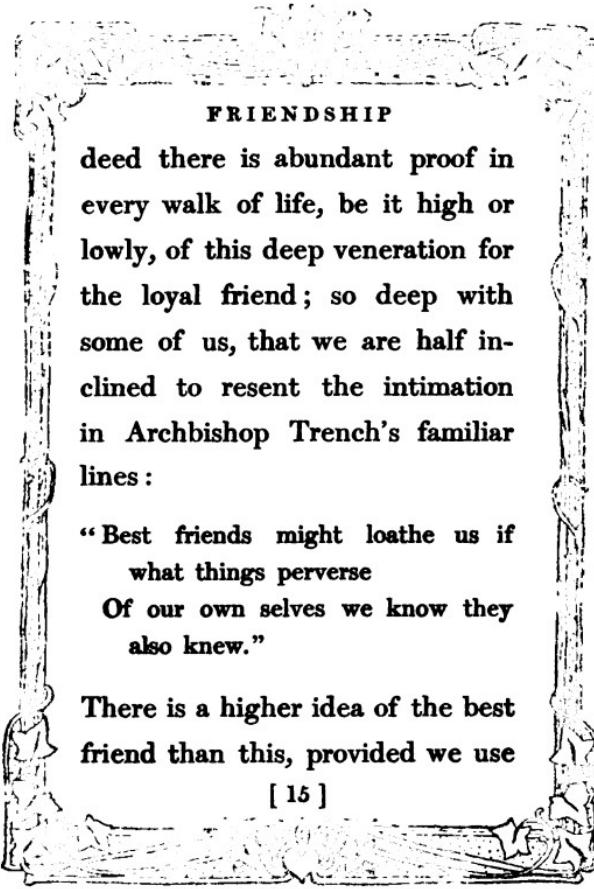
THE GOOD AND PERFECT GIFT

If any new word could be spoken on this world-old theme, how gladly some of us would welcome it, that we might pass it on to a friend! But even failing the new word, why may we not try to bring home to that friend a keener sense of the delight we take in his friendship? Succeed in this, and we shall at

FRIENDSHIP

least send a fine thrill to his heart, which is the most subtle sort of message.

There was a well-drawn picture a while ago in an English paper of an old woman propped in an easy-chair, with a sweet-faced parish visitor seated beside her. "And was your husband good and kind to you during your long illness?" asked the visitor. "Oh, yes, miss! 'e was just kind; 'e was more like a friend than a 'usband." And in-



FRIENDSHIP

deed there is abundant proof in every walk of life, be it high or lowly, of this deep veneration for the loyal friend; so deep with some of us, that we are half inclined to resent the intimation in Archbishop Trench's familiar lines :

“ Best friends might loathe us if
what things perverse
Of our own selves we know they
also knew.”

There is a higher idea of the best friend than this, provided we use



FRIENDSHIP

the superlative in its most truly superlative sense. He is best by reason of his acceptance of us, perverse things and all. He believes in our ideals. Therefore fall as far short of them as at times we must, his loyal heart will know not so much as a suggestion of any sense of loathing.

Keble has sung in one of his grand old hymns :

“ . . . The Lord who dwells on high
Knows all, yet loves us better than
He knows ! ”

FRIENDSHIP

And Love Divine, in its accepted meaning, is not the only love, thank God! that abundantly pardons. Yet on neither the faults nor the negations of character are the highest friendships established. In the great affirmations lie their strongholds. The life-direction toward everything high and ennobling, it is that which impels the soul to seek for the privilege of friendship. But you feel your way very cautiously at first. Not one step

[17]

FRIENDSHIP

will you encroach upon any one's reserves unbidden. If in the face, then, of your hesitating initiative you have the happiness to discover that the life which so attracts you is at the same moment reaching out toward you, there is cause indeed for gratitude.

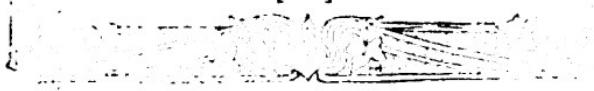
In that great, red book, "The Master Passion," — and turning its leaves one can but wonder by what masterful friendship it was inspired, — Dr. Trumbull maintains that "friendship is in no



FRIENDSHIP

sense contingent upon any reciprocal relation ;" but surely Dr. Trumbull is mistaken. The highest friendship is contingent. You can admire and worship and even love without return or recognition, as some of us admire and love many of the world's great heroes whom we have never seen ; but you must be your best friend's best friend. Only when friendship becomes reciprocal does it attain its own high goal. We seem to dishonor

[19]



FRIENDSHIP

the word when we let it stand for less than that, and to despoil it of half its glory. At the same time, it can be wholly unselfish; making no demands, exacting nothing, and, if need be, sacrificing everything.

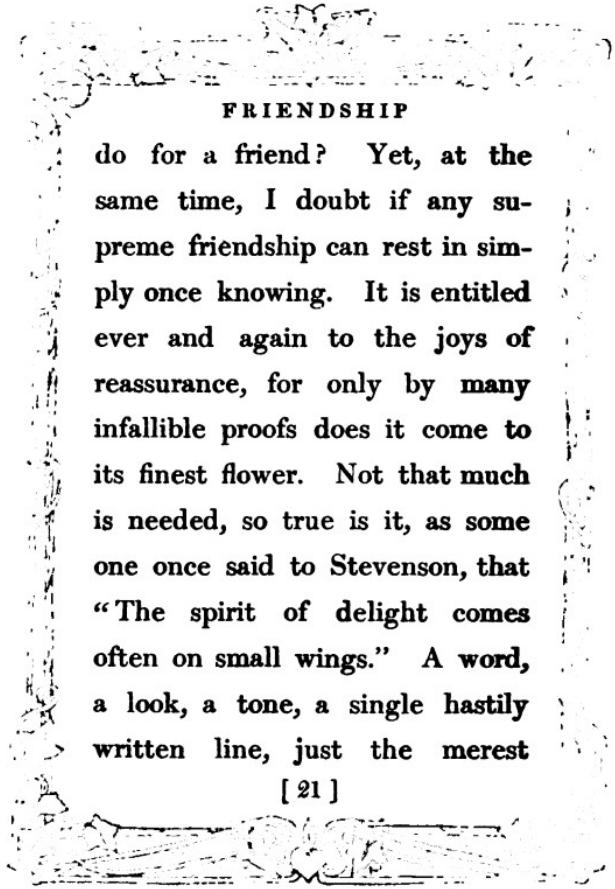
“ ‘ I would go to the gates of Hell
with a friend

Through thick and thin.’

The other said . . . ‘ I would go in.’ ”

Once know for a certainty that
your friendship is firmly estab-
lished, and what would you not

[20]



FRIENDSHIP

do for a friend? Yet, at the same time, I doubt if any supreme friendship can rest in simply once knowing. It is entitled ever and again to the joys of reassurance, for only by many infallible proofs does it come to its finest flower. Not that much is needed, so true is it, as some one once said to Stevenson, that "The spirit of delight comes often on small wings." A word, a look, a tone, a single hastily written line, just the merest

FRIENDSHIP

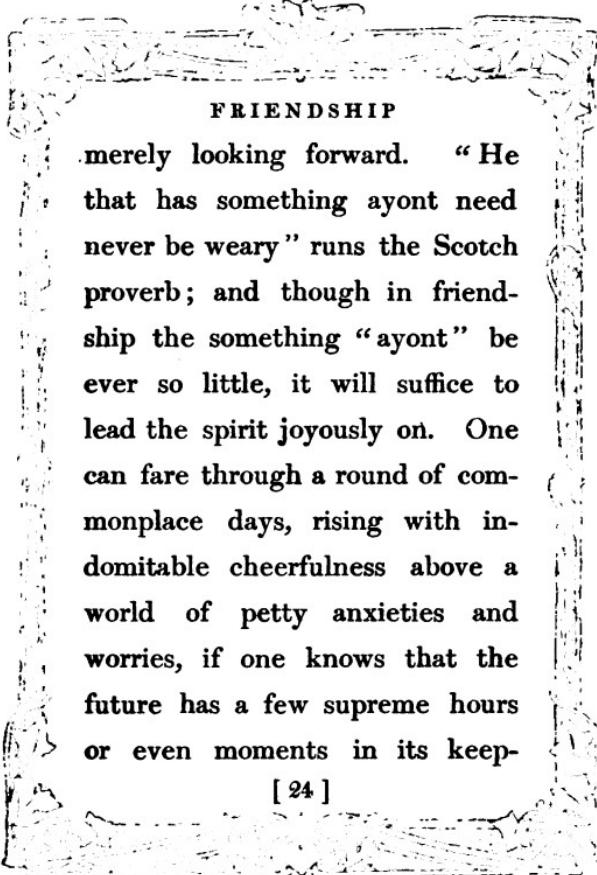
intimation that your friend is staunch and true and mindful, and you go on your way rejoicing. Indeed there are signal causes for rejoicing all along the line, since if it may not be one joy, it may be another. Friendship is so pre-eminently a matter of the spirit that it can take a world of pleasure in simply "living over," and yet it is enough of a philosopher to subsist on very little if it must, but only if it must. He who deliberately or

[22]

FRIENDSHIP

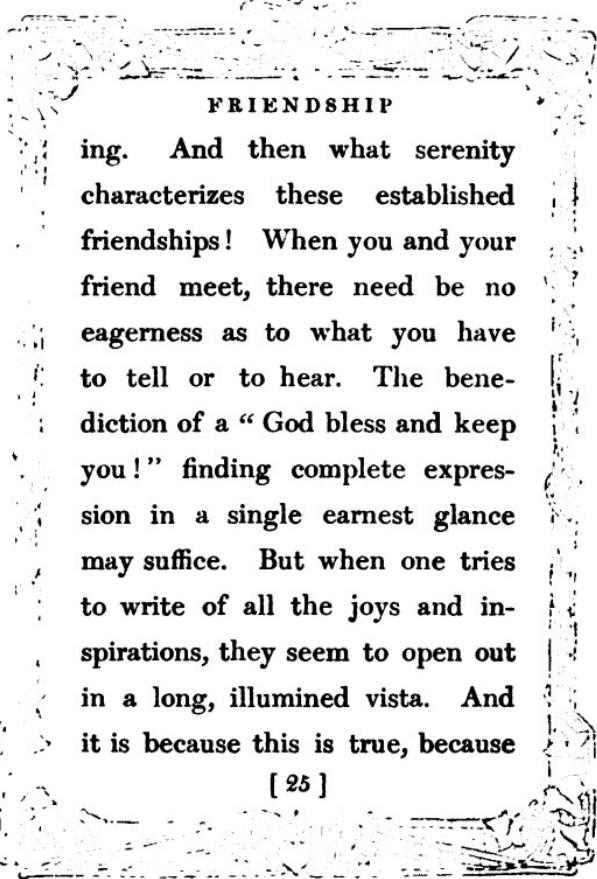
thoughtlessly starves a friendship deserves to lose his friend. As for distance, it is powerless over it. You can be consciously near a friend though an ocean roll between you, and often with a certain insistent conviction that you are in the mind of your friend. Who of us has not been assured of this at times?

Another witness to the fact that "the spirit of delight comes often on small wings" is, that one can take such satisfaction in



FRIENDSHIP

merely looking forward. "He that has something ayont need never be weary" runs the Scotch proverb; and though in friendship the something "ayont" be ever so little, it will suffice to lead the spirit joyously on. One can fare through a round of commonplace days, rising with indomitable cheerfulness above a world of petty anxieties and worries, if one knows that the future has a few supreme hours or even moments in its keep-



FRIENDSHIP

ing. And then what serenity characterizes these established friendships! When you and your friend meet, there need be no eagerness as to what you have to tell or to hear. The benediction of a "God bless and keep you!" finding complete expression in a single earnest glance may suffice. But when one tries to write of all the joys and inspirations, they seem to open out in a long, illumined vista. And it is because this is true, because

FRIENDSHIP

of this never-failing power to cheer, inspire, and comfort, that any friendship is lifted from the ranks of the ordinary to the ranks of the supreme; and by reason of this supremacy it has need to be carefully guarded. Its very fineness makes it sensitive. On even smaller wings than the spirit of delight comes the sinister little spirit of despair. A word, a look, a tone—and joy. Let them fail to be forthcoming —depression and heaviness of

FRIENDSHIP

heart. But in this are you trusting your friend? You are not mistrusting, I warrant, because you have no choice but to feel any neglect to the quick. But to be sensitive is not to be "touchy," of all the traits to which this human nature of ours is prone the most exasperating to others and the most harmfully retroactive. In any life worthy to be honored with the highest friendship there should be no room for touchiness, which in its

FRIENDSHIP

last analysis is, after all, but the evidence of an "over-emphasized egoism." True meekness — the meekness that means rest unto the soul — has lately been defined as the "Gentleness of supreme self-mastery." Let such meekness as that have large play in any life, and touchiness is forever eliminated. The self-mastered is not the self on the *qui vive* for slight, nor likely to be easily offended.

But if we have a right to look

[28]

FRIENDSHIP

for this freedom from touchiness because we feel that our friend understands, we have no right to impose on that understanding to the extent of dispensing with the little courtesies of life. The friendship that is characterized by such lack of consideration will, as a matter of course, fall very far short of its possibilities. George Eliot wonders "Why we sometimes behave the worst to those we love the most." Whatever may be the reason, it is all wrong.

FRIENDSHIP

The thoughtfulness that keeps us alert in all that affects the happiness of those we love should be innate. If not, then it can and must be cultivated. Do not even allow temperament to come between you and your friend. They have far too much to answer for,—these temperaments of ours, which so lord it over us and to which we so slavishly submit. Many a pleasure that would have come our way has gone by default, because temperament has

FRIENDSHIP

bade us withhold ; and withholding, we fail to receive. "With what measure ye mete"—it is infallible. Not that it is easily achieved, this freeing one's self from the grip of the inborn ; and it cannot be done once for all, the more's the pity. "They come high," with the other best things of life, these friendships that carry on the face of them their title to supremacy.

Still, not all their demands are along this disciplinary line.

[31]

FRIENDSHIP

Many of them it is merely a privilege to meet, as, for instance, the call for loyalty. To be loyal to your heart's core, what is that but to improve the highest opportunity that can come to you of witnessing to the strength of your friendship?

And now we are on the borders of a subject broad and many-sided, and one that is governed by an unwritten code. You cannot be instructed in loyalty. Its drafts must be honored intuit-

[32]

FRIENDSHIP

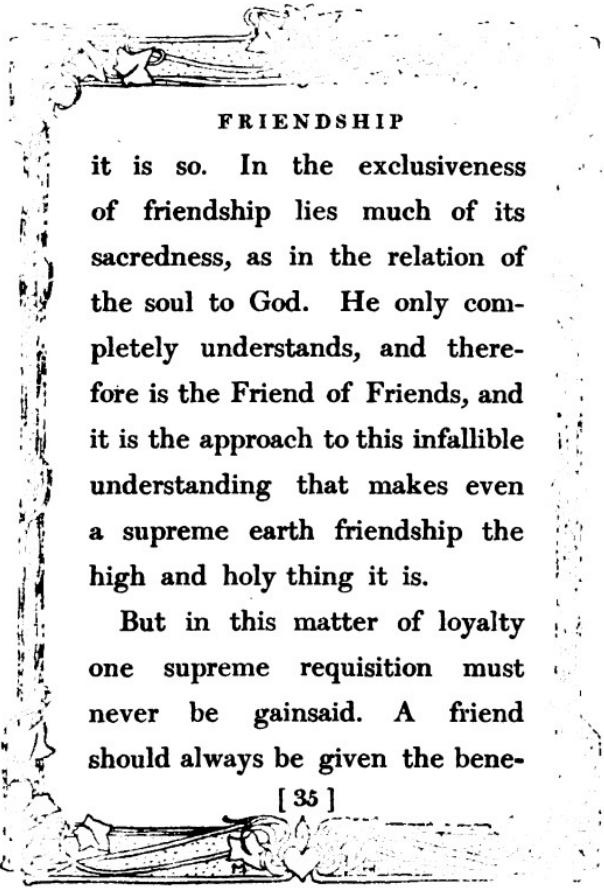
tively and instantly. At the same time, there are some honest differences of opinion as to its legitimate claims. For one, I maintain that loyalty does not impose the acceptance of your friend's friend. With some of us oftentimes such acceptance is simply impossible, for friendship is not something to be deliberately and conscientiously cultivated at will. Frequently, in point of fact, we really have no alternative but to accept our

[33]

FRIENDSHIP

friend's friends with the same tolerant withholding of judgment with which we are occasionally obliged to regard the choice they see fit to make in marriage. We are, of necessity, "without the pale;" consequently we do not understand. We do not understand because we feel no affinity. Affinity (it is a pity so telling a word has been so sentimentally overworked) rarely is felt, and so we understand comparatively few people. Let us be thankful that

[34]



FRIENDSHIP

it is so. In the exclusiveness of friendship lies much of its sacredness, as in the relation of the soul to God. He only completely understands, and therefore is the Friend of Friends, and it is the approach to this infallible understanding that makes even a supreme earth friendship the high and holy thing it is.

But in this matter of loyalty one supreme requisition must never be gainsaid. A friend should always be given the bene-

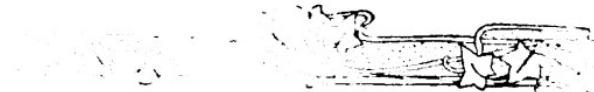
FRIENDSHIP

fit of the doubt ; but even then it is well to bear in mind that the chances are all in favor of having the doubt removed, if you kindly and frankly seek an explanation. If you fear that the circumstances do not admit of explanation, then you must be the judge whether still to hold to the semblance of a supreme friendship, or to risk a descent to lower levels. Better the risk, perhaps, as otherwise you may never make the welcome discovery that there

[36]

FRIENDSHIP

is no real ground for your fears, and so live on under a miserable misapprehension that might so easily have been exchanged for the joy of reassurance. And yet it is a serious undertaking, and one that calls for a deal of courage — this deliberately marking out a course that may leave you in the grasp of an unending heartache. No wonder that some would rather hold close a delusion of such supremacy than endure the dread alternative of



FRIENDSHIP

disillusion. But oh the sorrow of the hour when disillusion becomes inevitable, and when the suggestion of a radical flaw in your friend's character rapidly takes shape as a conviction. Is there any greater faintness of heart, I wonder, any more sickening sense as of the very foundations slipping from under your feet, than when you thus lose faith in a friend, and in the face, too, of a superhuman effort to convince yourself that there can-

FRIENDSHIP

not, must not, be any reason for losing faith. You may resolve to shut your eyes to the flaw, and not even to believe in it, but to no avail! Underlying all resolve is a haunting sense of a grief that will not down. Fortunate is he who at such a time can take refuge in the invulnerable character of other relationships,—relationships that have stood every test, and of which one can feel as sure as though Finis were already written at the end of

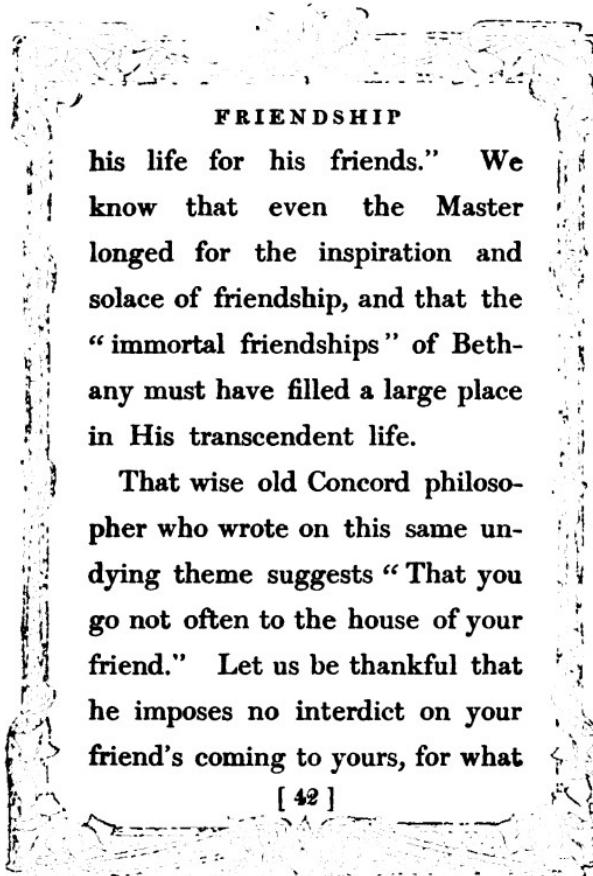
FRIENDSHIP

the life-chapter. But surely for nothing less than failure in integrity must you ever fail your friend. And never, by all the love you bear or ever bore him, never be hard upon him. Suppose he has offended. There are a dozen eloquent ways by which he can convince you he is sorry. Do not compel him to put it into words. Is it not the chief prerogative of your friendship that you understand? Some one said the other day, "The friend-

[40]

FRIENDSHIP

ships that I make are a part of my religion ; " and a very joyous part of one's religion they may indeed become, and a never-failing source of comfort and of blessing. And have you ever thought how this joy in friendship pervades all life, everywhere finding expression in song and story, letter and sermon ? The Old Testament is aglow with it. The Christ-story is illumined by it. " Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down



FRIENDSHIP

his life for his friends." We know that even the Master longed for the inspiration and solace of friendship, and that the "immortal friendships" of Bethany must have filled a large place in His transcendent life.

That wise old Concord philosopher who wrote on this same undying theme suggests "That you go not often to the house of your friend." Let us be thankful that he imposes no interdict on your friend's coming to yours, for what

FRIENDSHIP

can compare with the pleasure of having your friend in your house, unless possibly that of being in the house of your friend.

I know of no book that rings all the blessed changes of friendship more delightfully than the life of Phillips Brooks. In this, as in all else, that great preacher in some surpassing way caught the spirit of the Master. In one letter he writes, "I am sure that our friends must be more and not less to us in the other world, and

FRIENDSHIP

that this world only begins friend-
ship."

Dean Alford was sure of it with
a divine assurance when midway
in his inspired hymn he wrote,
his whole soul glowing with the
splendid thought,

"Oh then what raptured greetings
On Canaan's happy shore ;
What knitting severed friendships
up,
Where partings are no more."

"It has been ascertained," says
a writer in a recent article on the

[44]

FRIENDSHIP

balometer (that wonderful invention whereby men actually weigh the sunlight), "that when by means of a glass prism you break up the white light of a sunbeam into a rainbow spectrum, with a band of red at the lower edge and of violet at the upper, you are seeing only a part of the rays the beam contains, because the human eye is unable to distinguish what is below the red and above the violet. Note the less beyond both edges of the visible

FRIENDSHIP

rainbow are regions of unknown color.

It is possible to demonstrate the existence of these invisible colors, because man has succeeded in constructing an instrument with nerves more sensitive and senses more delicate than his own, by means of which he has been able not only to explore these unknown color regions, but to map them out in detail." Exactly how this is achieved can only be explained to the student.

FRIENDSHIP

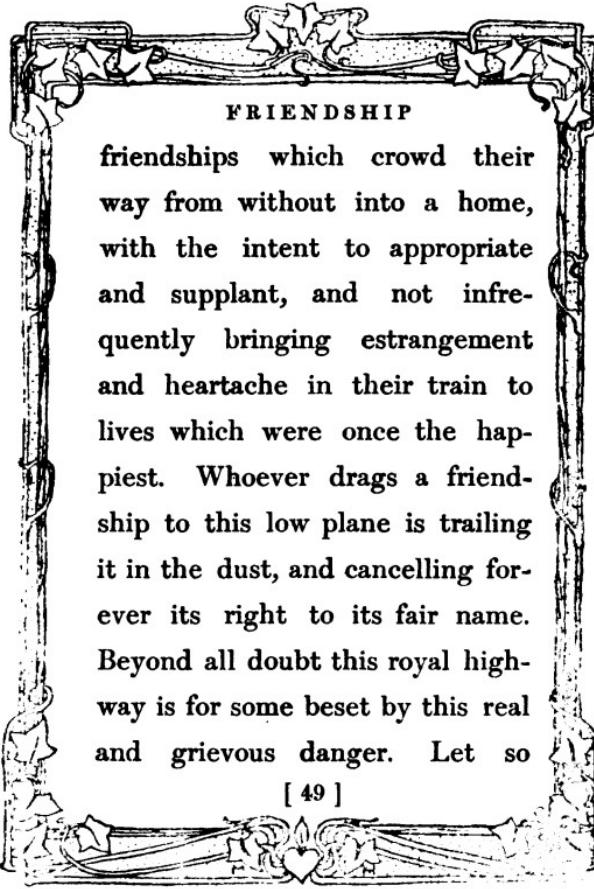
The rest of us must content ourselves with the "It has been ascertained" of the scientist.

And so of friendship. By means of an inner vision "it has been ascertained" by some who know of what they speak that this world only begins friendship. How can it be otherwise, with such an unselfish and masterful affection, dependent upon no earth-ties of marriage or kinship, and interfering with none of earth's relationships; in very

FRIENDSHIP

truth, with very little of the merely earthly about it save the natural longing of the human heart for a measure of companionship. And right here we do well to lay stress on this hallmark of supreme friendship,—a non-interference with any established relationships.

There is an unworthy affection which poses sometimes as friendship, and which under its guise seeks and claims returns to which it has no right. I mean the



FRIENDSHIP

friendships which crowd their way from without into a home, with the intent to appropriate and supplant, and not infrequently bringing estrangement and heartache in their train to lives which were once the happiest. Whoever drags a friendship to this low plane is trailing it in the dust, and cancelling forever its right to its fair name. Beyond all doubt this royal highway is for some beset by this real and grievous danger. Let so

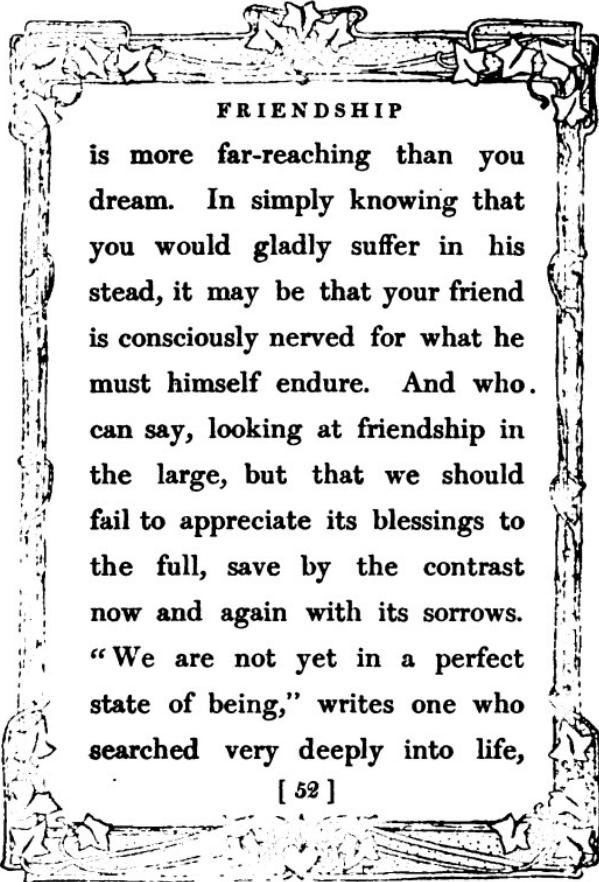
FRIENDSHIP

much as an intimation of its existence in any friendship of yours or mine make us quick to place it on some high altar of unselfish consecration, there to be jealously guarded. And not alone by danger is this great highway beset. Sorrow often lies in wait beside it,—sorrow the keenest and the deepest, as when your friend is in dire need and you are powerless to help; when nothing that any one can do can help.

[50]

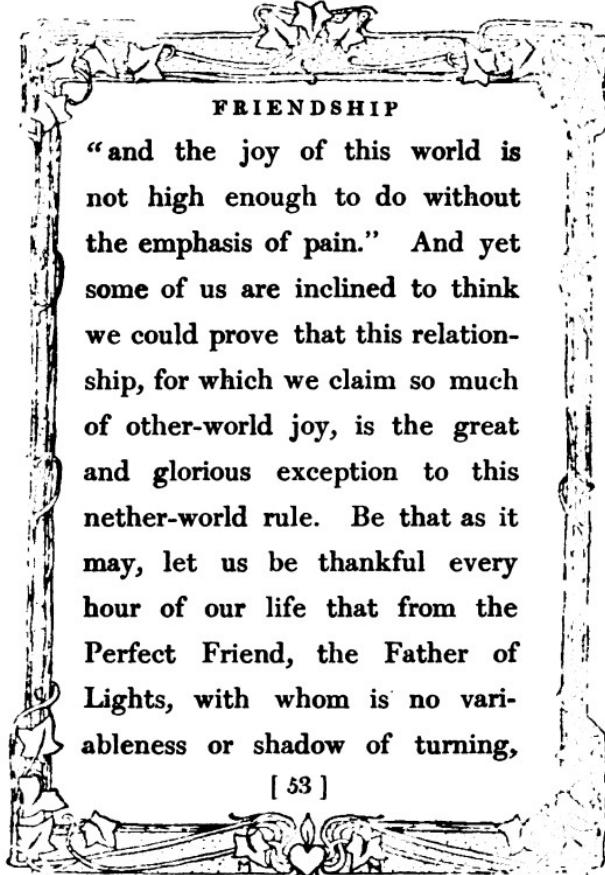
FRIENDSHIP

I do not mean by this those inner crises of the spirit when to be the Friend of God must be the one supreme factor, but when, in the stress of living, your friend has to cope with some crushing experience, some heart-breaking anxiety, or loss, and when all that you can hope at best to do is possibly to lessen the weight of the burden in some scarcely appreciable degree. And yet you cannot tell but that the sweep of your deep sympathy



FRIENDSHIP

is more far-reaching than you dream. In simply knowing that you would gladly suffer in his stead, it may be that your friend is consciously nerved for what he must himself endure. And who can say, looking at friendship in the large, but that we should fail to appreciate its blessings to the full, save by the contrast now and again with its sorrows. "We are not yet in a perfect state of being," writes one who searched very deeply into life,



FRIENDSHIP

"and the joy of this world is not high enough to do without the emphasis of pain." And yet some of us are inclined to think we could prove that this relationship, for which we claim so much of other-world joy, is the great and glorious exception to this nether-world rule. Be that as it may, let us be thankful every hour of our life that from the Perfect Friend, the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness or shadow of turning,

FRIENDSHIP

cometh down upon us his children, for our ineffable delight and consolation, this "good and perfect gift" of friendship.

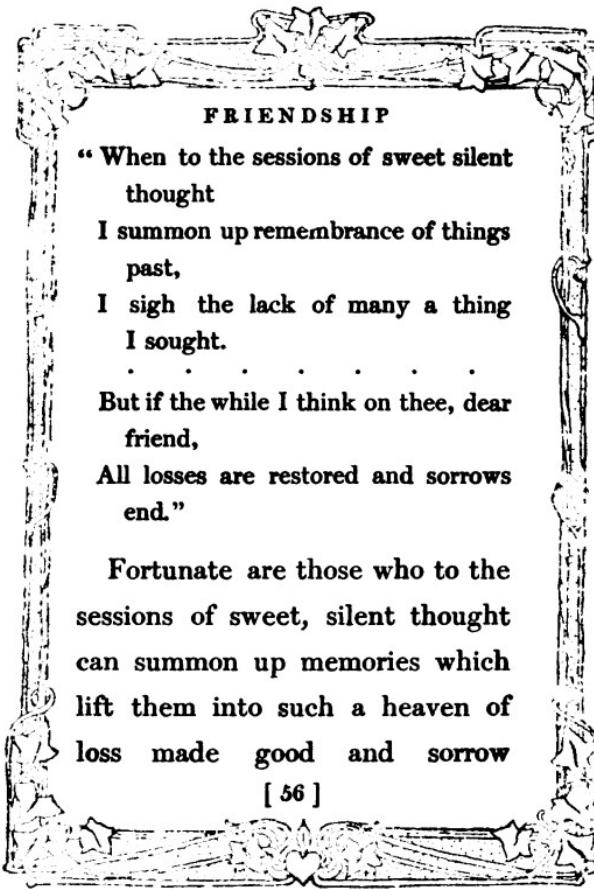
"With whom is no variability." Here we have the Divine Ideal. Let us rest in nothing short of this. Let us strive to banish, so long as ever we may, those strange moods, born who knows of what unhallowed mental processes, which so often seek to blight and mar a friendship. If at last refusing to be held

FRIENDSHIP

at bay, let them at least be endured in silence until they pass. As mysteriously as they came will they vanish into thin air, and then we will breathe free once more, thankful to have spared our friend all knowledge of the baneful mood, for which we hold ourselves, and rightly too, perhaps, in some dim way responsible.

To the limitless goodness of this gift Shakespeare set his seal in the familiar lines:

[55]

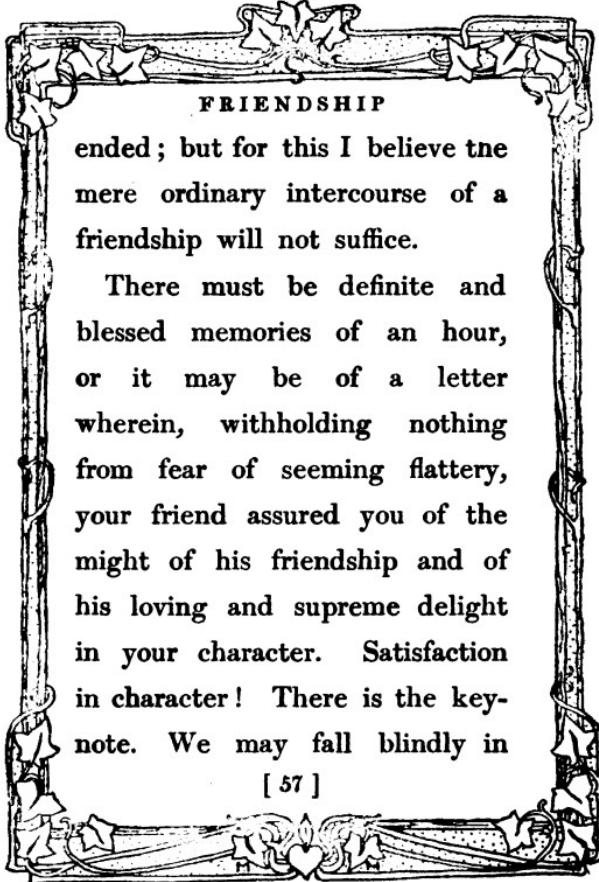


FRIENDSHIP

“ When to the sessions of sweet silent
thought
I summon up remembrance of things
past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing
I sought.
· · · · ·
But if the while I think on thee, dear
friend,
All losses are restored and sorrows
end.”

Fortunate are those who to the
sessions of sweet, silent thought
can summon up memories which
lift them into such a heaven of
loss made good and sorrow

[56]



FRIENDSHIP

ended ; but for this I believe the mere ordinary intercourse of a friendship will not suffice.

There must be definite and blessed memories of an hour, or it may be of a letter wherein, withholding nothing from fear of seeming flattery, your friend assured you of the might of his friendship and of his loving and supreme delight in your character. Satisfaction in character ! There is the keynote. We may fall blindly in

FRIENDSHIP

love, — “*On subit l'amour,*” — but the friendships that measure up to the highest standards are the outcome, with but few exceptions, of very calm and very deliberate choice. Not that either of the partners to this choice deems the character of the other for one moment perfect, — an undesirable because unnatural claim to be made for any life, however saintly, — but each rests in the assurance that the other ever strives to keep that high ideal in

[58]

FRIENDSHIP

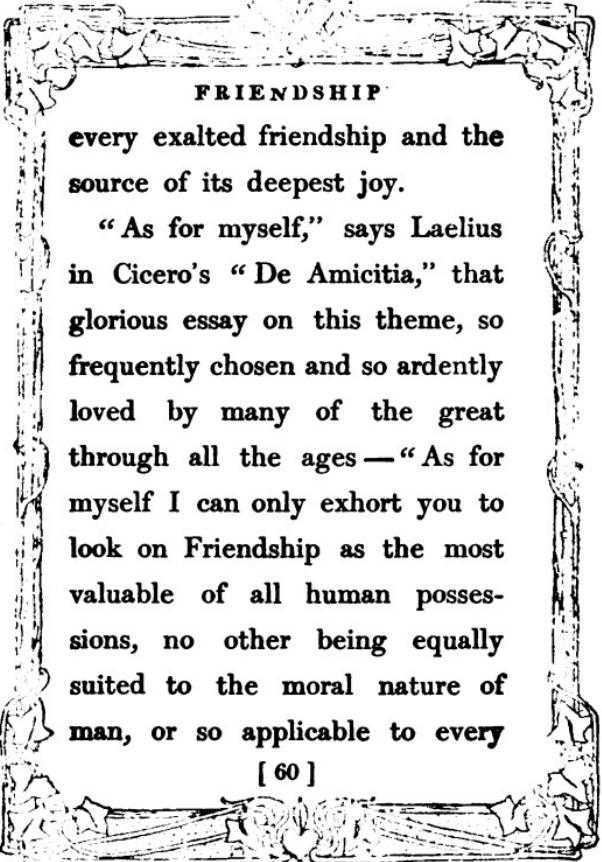
mind. Surely there can be no greater safeguard than the inspiration of such a friendship. And of this inspiration is born a blessed hope. Tennyson voices it in "In Memoriam :"

"There flutters up a happy thought
Self balanced on a lightsome wing.

Since we deserved the name of friends
And thine effect so lives in me
A part of mine may live in thee
And move thee on to nobler ends."

This mutual power to move to nobler ends becomes the test of

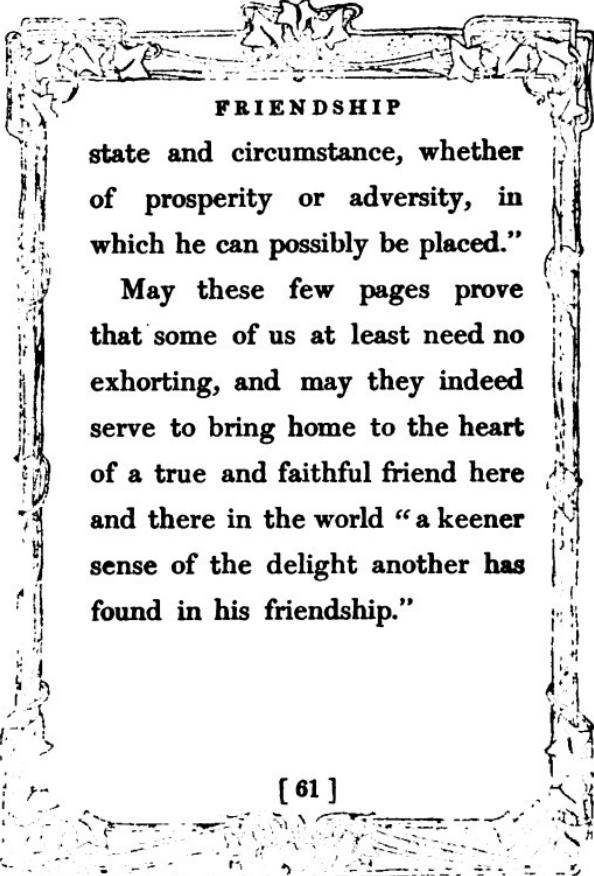
[59]



FRIENDSHIP

every exalted friendship and the source of its deepest joy.

"As for myself," says Laelius in Cicero's "De Amicitia," that glorious essay on this theme, so frequently chosen and so ardently loved by many of the great through all the ages—"As for myself I can only exhort you to look on Friendship as the most valuable of all human possessions, no other being equally suited to the moral nature of man, or so applicable to every



FRIENDSHIP

state and circumstance, whether of prosperity or adversity, in which he can possibly be placed."

May these few pages prove that some of us at least need no exhorting, and may they indeed serve to bring home to the heart of a true and faithful friend here and there in the world "a keener sense of the delight another has found in his friendship."

BRENTANO'S
Booksellers & Stationers.



Digitized by Google

AL 1842.75

Friendship, the good and perfect gift
Widener Library

005372257



3 2044 080 912 447